

Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
**Measles Alert – May 11, 2016**

**A confirmed case of measles has been identified in an individual who was at The Pewter Shop, Sea Star Gift Shop, Brothers' Brew Coffee Shop and other stores in Rockport Village on May 3, 2016 from 11:30AM – 4:00PM.**

**What you should do immediately:**

**1) Check to see if you are vaccinated, or have laboratory evidence of immunity to measles.**

- Do you have documentation of two doses of measles-containing vaccine (the **MMR**)? One dose?
- Do you have a positive laboratory result showing immunity or past measles infection (a positive titer, or other lab result)?
  - Note: a history of having measles in the past, without lab evidence, is not accepted as evidence of immunity.
- If you were born in the US before 1957, it is very likely that you are immune to measles. (This does not apply to healthcare workers.) To increase the likelihood you are protected against measles, consider receiving a dose of MMR vaccine.

**2) Get vaccinated quickly if appropriate to avoid exclusion:**

- If you do not have evidence of two doses of vaccination, or lab evidence of immunity, and weren't born in the US prior to 1957, **you must receive a dose of MMR vaccine as soon as possible.**
- If you only have evidence of one dose of MMR, get a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose ASAP. Some people get a blood test for immunity to measles and a dose of MMR vaccine, at the same visit. A positive test result (titer) can expedite going back to work or school.
- The MMR vaccine is available at many locations, including at many pharmacies. If you get a dose of vaccine quickly you may avoid being excluded from public activities.
- MMR vaccination is not recommended for infants < six months, pregnant women, those with severe allergies to the vaccine or with severe immunocompromise – see below.

**3) Young infants, pregnant women, severe vaccine allergies or immunocompromising health conditions:**

- MMR vaccination is not recommended for infants < six months, pregnant women, those with severe allergies to the vaccine or with severe immunocompromise. Infants too young to be vaccinated will have to remain at home during the exclusion period (see below).
- Pregnant women and those with severe vaccine allergies or immunocompromising health conditions should get blood work to see if they are immune to measles. If NOT immune, they should discuss with their provider and will have to remain at home during the exclusion period. If you are pregnant (or think that you might be), if you have a weakened immune system, or if you have an infant under one year of age, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible. A treatment called immune globulin may be given to help modify measles.

**Exclusion from all public activities**

People who are exposed to measles and who do not have evidence of immunity **must get vaccinated** or may have to stay home (avoiding all public activities, including work and school) from the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> days after the exposure. In this situation, if you were exposed on May 3, it means you may need to stay home from May 8 through May 24 returning to public activities on May 25.

If you live, work or attend school in Boston please contact the Boston Public Health Commission at 617-534-5611.

**What if I develop measles symptoms?**

- If you develop symptoms of measles, please stay home and call your doctor. Make sure they know in advance that you have been exposed to measles so they can ensure that other patients are not exposed when you visit. See page two of this document for more information about measles.

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**What is measles?**

Measles is a very contagious disease that usually lasts a week or two. It can cause serious problems like ear infections, pneumonia, swelling of the brain in some people, especially pregnant women, infants, and those with weakened immune systems. Adults are also at increased risk for severe disease and may need to be hospitalized due to complications.

**What are the symptoms?**

Measles looks and feels like a cold at first. A cough, high fever, runny nose, and red watery eyes are common. These symptoms start about ten days after infection. A few days later, a red blotchy rash starts on the face first, and then spreads to the rest of the body.

**How is measles spread?**

The virus that causes measles lives in the nose and throat and is sprayed into the air when an infected person coughs or talks. Other people nearby can then inhale the virus. Measles is very infectious and can stay in the air for up to two hours after the contagious person has left the room. Touching tissues or sharing a cup used by someone with measles also spreads the virus. People with measles are infectious for 4 days prior to rash onset, until 4 days after onset. If someone is susceptible to measles and they become infected, they usually show symptoms 10-14 days after exposure.

**Can measles be prevented?**

Yes, there is a vaccine to prevent measles. (It protects against measles, mumps, and rubella and is called the MMR). The vaccine is normally given to young children, but adolescents and adults who are not immune should also be vaccinated. Adults born in or after 1957 and children  $\geq$  12 months of age should have documentation of 2 doses of MMR or serologic evidence of immunity to measles, or lab evidence of past infection with measles.

**What should people who work in high risk settings do?**

If you are a clinician or work in a healthcare facility, daycare, or any other high risk setting, you should have evidence of immunity to measles, as described above. Birth in the U.S. prior to 1957 is not considered adequate evidence of immunity for healthcare providers.

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